

Ladybarn House, M14 6ND

Design & Access Statement



05 September 2023





Existing view of southern entrances

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement is being submitted on behalf of Bluesky Student Ladybarn House Ltd / Forge Development in support of the planning application for proposed works to the existing student accommodation complex at Ladybarn House, 301 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6ND.

- The proposals include the following;
- Site-wide interior refurbishment of the existing student accommodation
 - 3 no. additional student studios within the existing building envelope.
 - Interior conversion of vacant ground floor commercial unit into student communal amenity space.

The proposal for the additional student studios features the internal optimisation of existing spaces with no changes to the existing massing of any buildings.

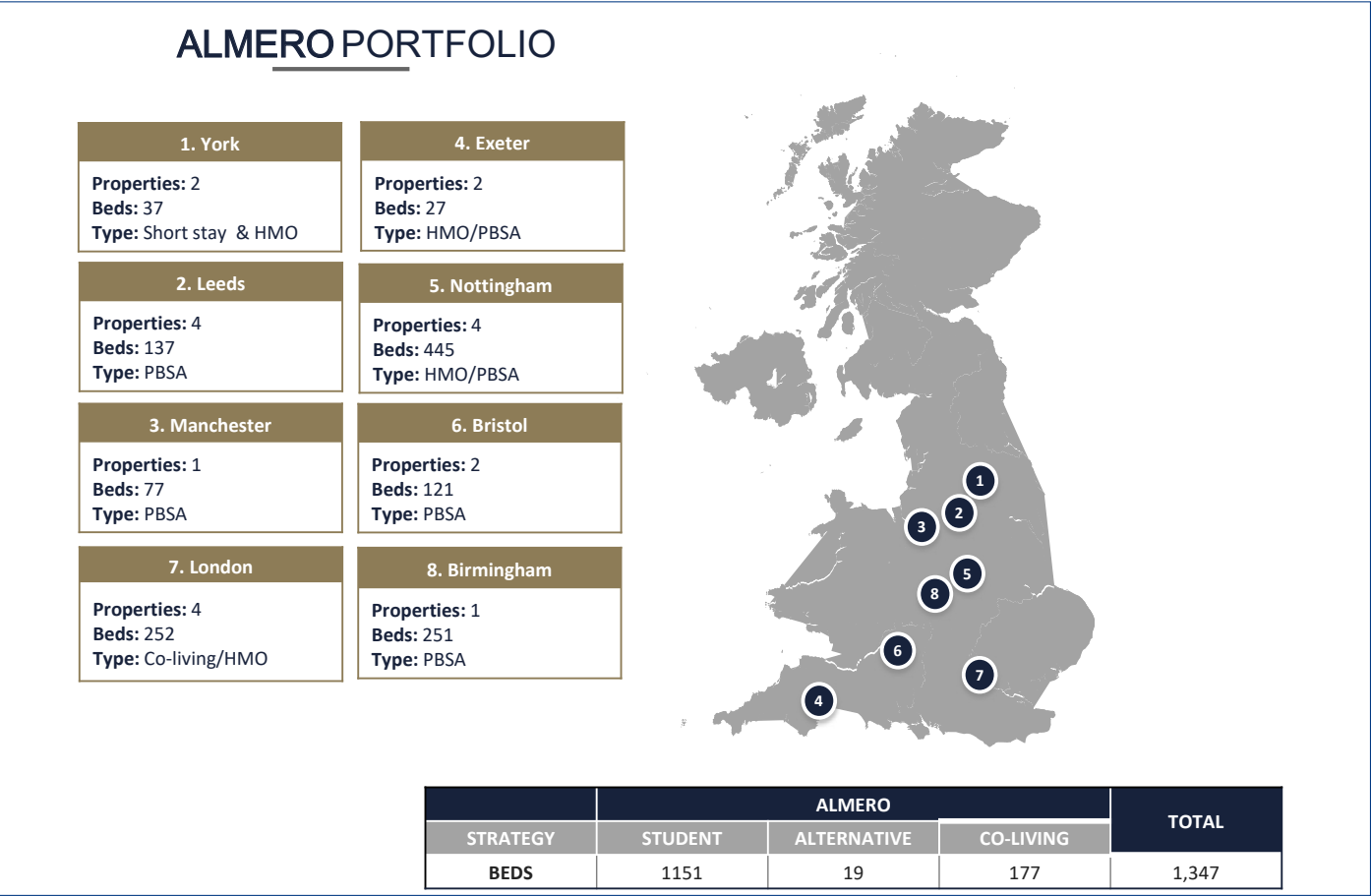
This document describes these proposals in more detail and should be read in conjunction with the planning application drawings. Reference should also be made to any supplementary information produced by various specialist consultants and submitted under separate cover as part of the application.

Project team

- **Client / Applicant:** Forge Development / Bluesky Student Ladybarn House Ltd
- **Student Operator / Manager:** Almero Student
- **Architect:** BAL Architecture
- **Town Planning Consultant:** THIS Planning
- **Project Manager:** CPC Project Services
- **Cost Consultant:** Project 1201

1.2. Applicant overview

Almero Student currently operate over 20 properties across the UK, housing a population of over 1,300 residents. They specialise in providing well-managed, clean and comfortable accommodation - that feels like a sophisticated home from home. All accommodation is truly all inclusive - featuring utilities, TV Licence and WiFi as standard. A dedicated in-house management team, overseeing marketing, letting and maintenance aim to ensure all student's have the best possible living experience.



Map of existing Almero student sites across the UK



Example internal views from recently refurbished Almero Student Beech Gardens accommodation in Birmingham

1.3. Project objectives

The main goal of this project is to enhance the experience and well being of every student.

To achieve this the applicant has established the following project mission statement;

- To improve the standard and quality of living for all students.
- To improve the property's appearance in the wider local community.
- To improve the co-inhabitancy of the accommodation to enhance the sense of community on the site.
- To improve the communal amenity space for the students and enhance student well being.



Existing front and rear views of the property

2. Site Analysis

2.1. Site location

Site location

Ladybarn House is located at 301 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6ND.

Site connectivity

Walking

The site is within a short walk of the University of Manchester's Fallowfield Campus which features the Armitage Sports Centre, Firs Botanical Grounds and several university buildings and accommodation blocks. Wilmslow Road to the south and Wilbraham Road to the west feature an array of retail, supermarket, food/beverage and healthcare facilities. The large open green space of Platts Field Park is a short walk to the west.

Cycling

The town centre is 15 minutes cycle ride away northwards along Wilmslow Road and Oxford Road.

Train

Levenshulme Railway Station is 20 min. walk east of the site and features regular trains to Manchester Piccadilly Station.

Bus

Numerous bus stops are located within a short walk from the site, with regular busses towards Manchester University buildings and the city centre.



Aerial view of the site in context

2.2. Site context

The site

The site comprises an 'L' shaped, four storey building, with a small element on the corner containing a fifth storey.

The building features purpose built student accommodation accessed from Moseley Road to the north, Wilmslow Road to the west and a relatively large car park space along Carrill Drive to the south. The east of the site features a private green space with mature trees.

The building features four ground floor commercial units with direct street access along Wilmslow Road and rear access from the car park.

Internally, the student accommodation comprises a mixture of four-bedroom flats, one-bedroom flats and self-contained studios, accessed via four separate stairwells.

The property was built circa. 1993 and features traditional masonry construction with fully glazed stairwells and concrete tiled pitched roofs.



Aerial view of the existing site

2.2. Site context

Existing aerial views



Existing aerial view from the north west



Existing aerial view from the north east



Existing aerial view from the south east



Existing aerial view from the south west

2.3. Site constraints

1. Quality of existing accommodation

- Most existing student accommodation and communal spaces are tired and in need of some refurbishment and modernisation.



Internal views of typical existing lounge, kitchen and bathroom spaces

2. Car parking space

- There is currently an over provision of car parking spaces on the site.
- The existing car park has very low occupancy and is mostly always vacant.
- The expanse of car parking results in poor pedestrian connectivity across the southern approach to the site and a lack of usable outdoor amenity space.

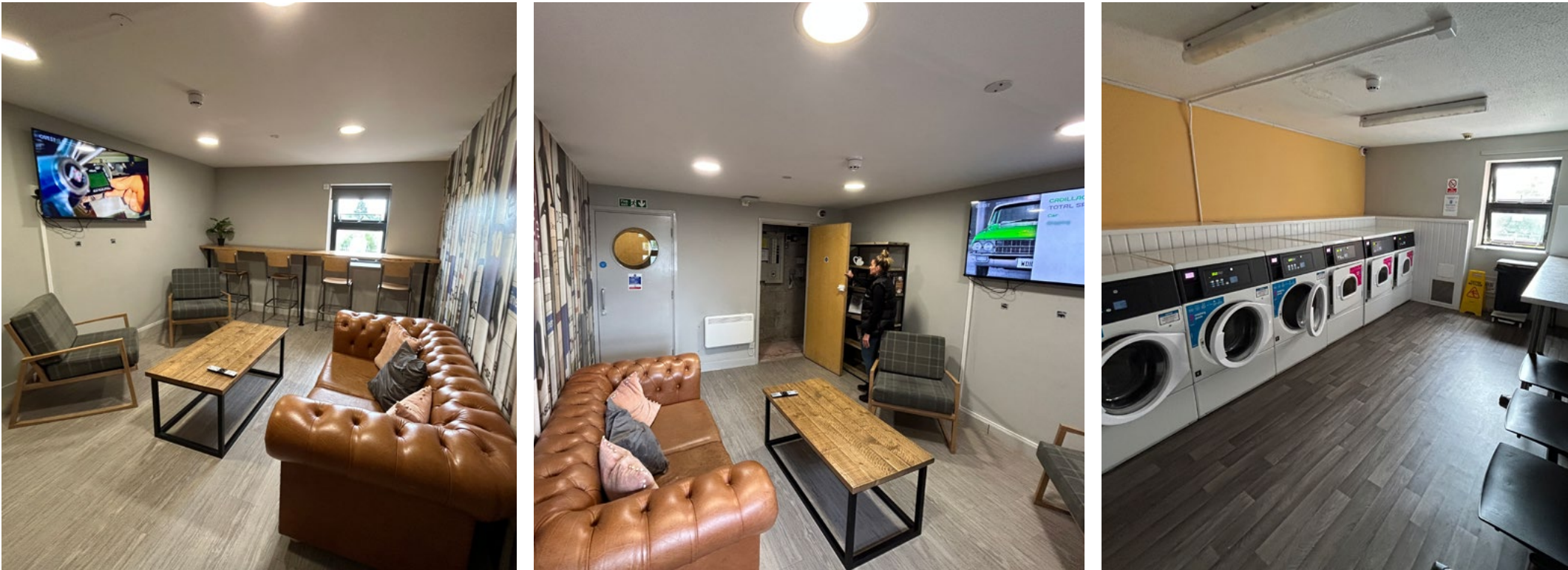


Existing views of vast array of empty car parking spaces and lack of secure cycle parking and usable outdoor amenity space

2.3. Site constraints

3. Quality of existing internal communal amenity

- Existing communal 'Common Room' at level 2 is small, under used and not popular with the students.
- Lack of high quality, 'social' communal amenity space provided for the large student population, results in a poor sense of community.
- Student communal spaces should be popular, vibrant social spaces, but they currently have a dated aesthetic with limited facilities and do not offer good value for money.



Internal views of existing communal 'Common Room' at level 2 and Laundry room at level 1

4. Ground floor commercial units and street frontages

- 2 out of the 4 existing commercial units are vacant and shuttered, resulting in poor street activation and uninviting street frontages.
- Visually prominent corner unit has been vacant for years.
- The aesthetic of the street frontage is in a very poor condition and in urgent need of refurbishment.



Existing views of vacant ground floor commercial units with shuttered street frontages

2.4. Site opportunities

1. Significantly enhance the quality of existing accommodation and offer students more value for their money.
2. Utilise the primary vacant ground floor commercial unit for high quality communal amenity space for students - creating a greater sense of community, enhancing student well-being and reinvigorating the street frontage.
3. Repurpose the existing common room, laundry and ground floor office space to create additional student studio accommodation.
4. Enhance site-wide connections and make better use of existing outdoor spaces.



Enhanced student facilities and well-being - Example images

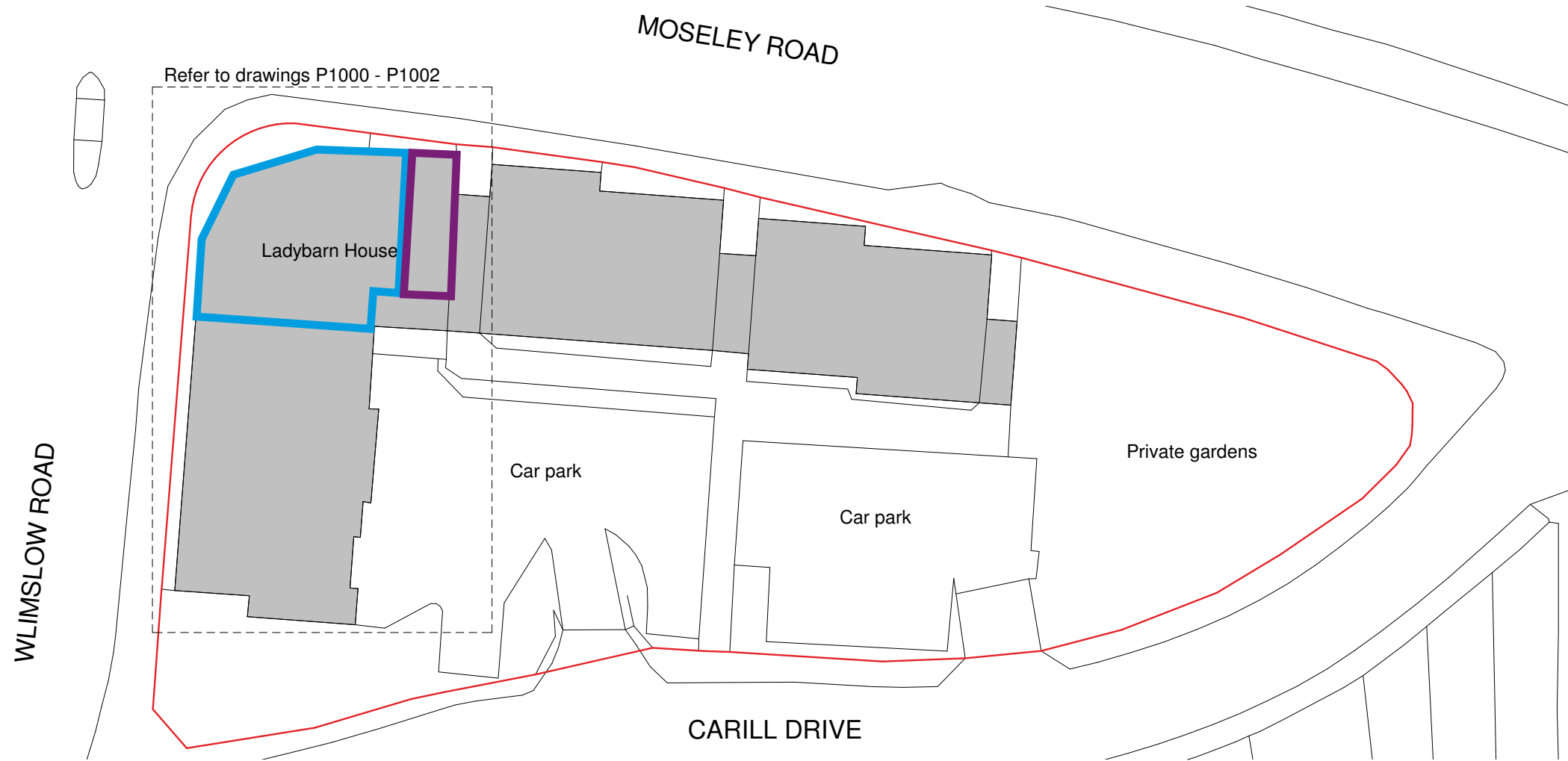
3. Design Proposals

3.1. Overview of the proposals

The proposals seek to rejuvenate the site and create new, high quality student accommodation and communal amenity space.

The proposals are summarised as follows:

-  **Site-wide interior refurbishment**
Modernising and renovating the internal finishes of the existing accommodation as required.
-  **3 no. new studios**
Converting the existing staff office space (ground floor), laundry room (level 1) and common room (level 2) into new high-quality studios featuring kitchenettes and en-suites.
-  **New communal amenity space**
Conversion of vacant ground floor commercial unit into high quality new student communal amenity space



Existing site plan highlighting scope of proposals

3.2. Refurbishment

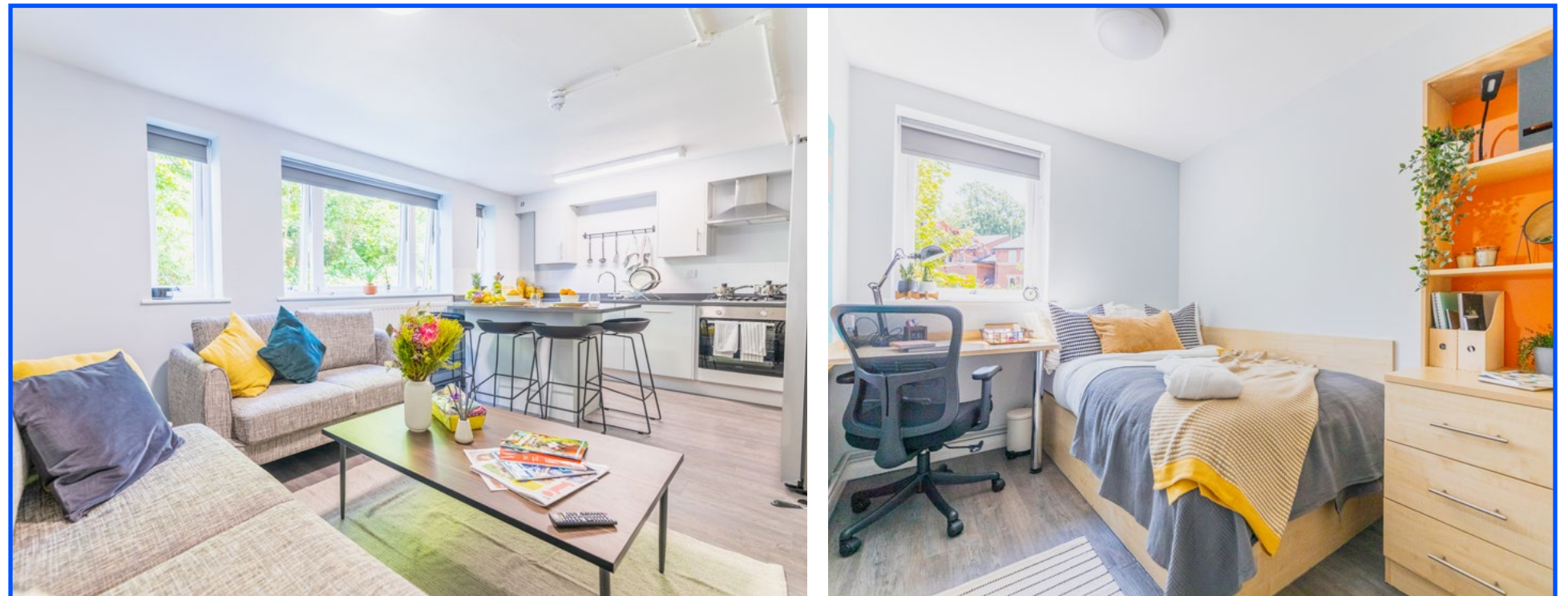
The internal finishes of the existing student accommodation blocks are proposed to be renovated and modernised, wherever required, as follows:

- Painting walls and ceilings of bedrooms, communal areas and corridors
- New flooring
- New modern LED lighting in all spaces
- New kitchen worktops, cupboards and appliances
- New bathroom sanitaryware
- New loose furniture

Existing Ladybarn House interiors



Example of Almero Student recently refurbished interiors



3.3. New studios

Three existing self-contained spaces have been identified for interior conversion into high quality new student studios.

- 1. The existing staff office at ground floor level is proposed to become a 21m² student studio.
- 2. The existing Laundry Room and spare Cleaner's Cupboard at first floor level is proposed to become a 19m² student studio.
- 3. The existing Common Room and spare Cleaner's Cupboard at second floor level is proposed to become a 19m² student studio.

The proposals do not require any changes to the existing building's massing or external elevations.

Residential design quality

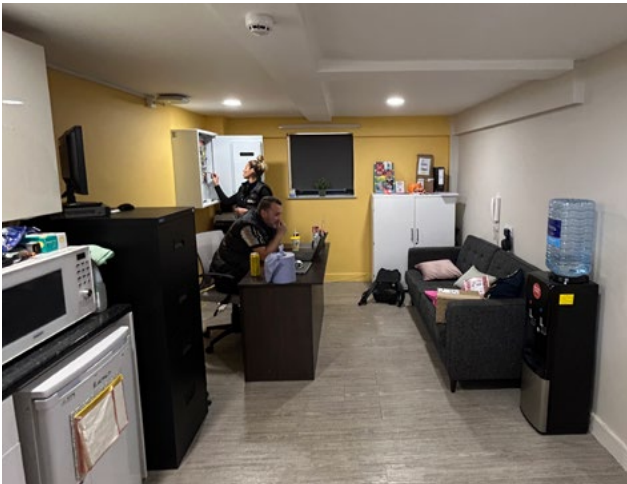
All of the 3 no. proposed studios have been designed to deliver the highest quality internal living environment.

With an internal area of 19-21m² the proposed studios would be spacious and bright.

Each proposed studio features a large en-suite bathroom, private kitchen, double bed, desk and wardrobe. All new fixtures, fittings and sanitaryware are proposed to be energy efficient and high-quality.

The studios at level 1 and level 2 feature a secure access zone to enable private and discreet maintenance access to the existing retained services riser.

The proposed studios would help to diversify the residential offering across the site.



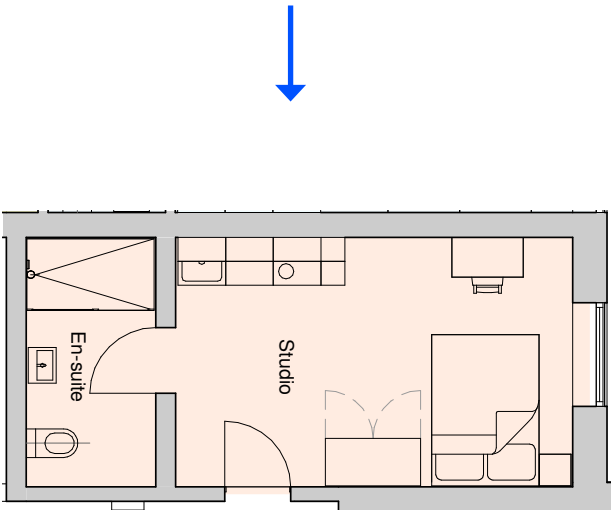
Existing ground floor staff office



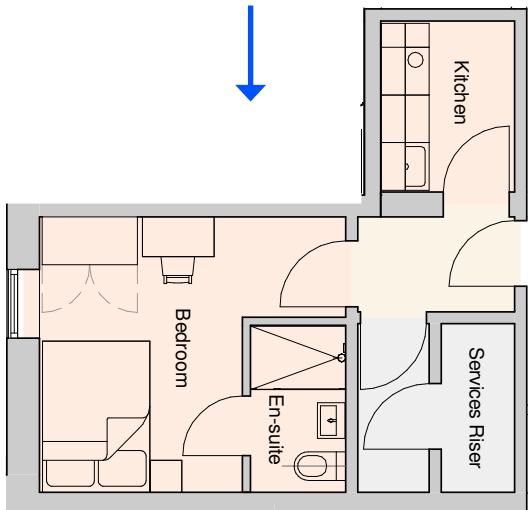
Existing level 1 laundry room



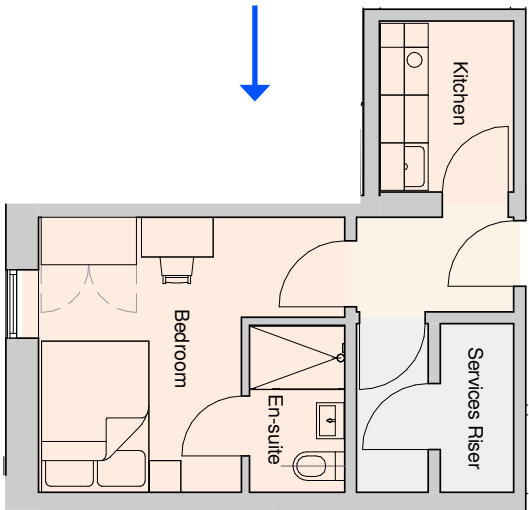
Existing level 2 common room



Proposed plan of new ground floor studio (21m²)



Proposed plan of new level 1 studio (19m²)



Proposed plan of new level 2 studio (19m²)



Example images of similar sized student studios by Forge Development located at Almero Student properties in Exeter and Birmingham

3.4. New communal amenity

The existing vacant commercial unit located on the corner at ground floor level, is proposed to be converted into a high quality new communal amenity space for the students.

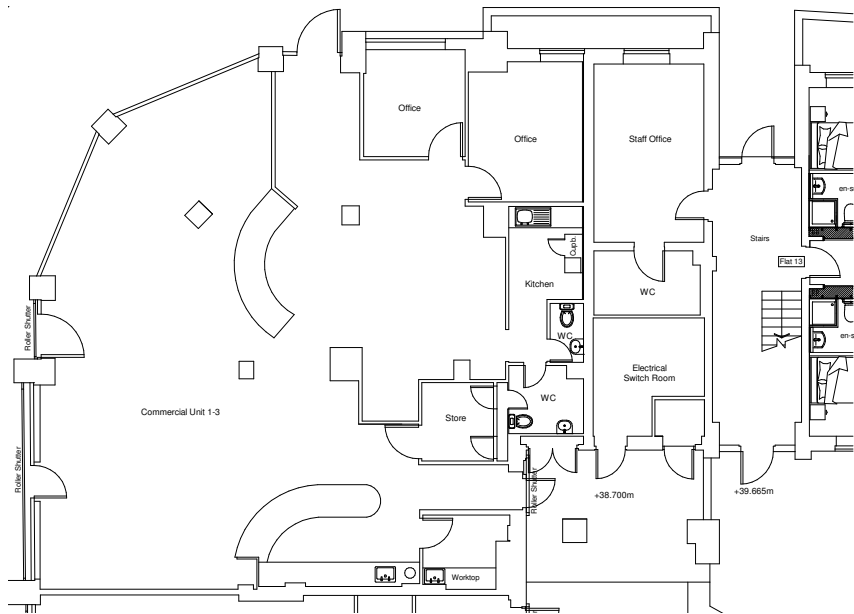
The proposed space features the re-provision of the laundry facility and staff office.

The large open-plan communal space would facilitate flexible layouts suitable for a range of popular amenity activities such as private/group study, social gaming, TV lounge, and cinema screenings.

The proposed new use would activate and rejuvenate the street frontages, which would be cleaned and refurbished as required.

Some new external steps are proposed opposite the rear access door of the amenity space to enhance the pedestrian experience from the accommodation blocks to the east. The proposed steps would mediate an existing site level difference of around 1m and offer a more direct and safe access route for the students.

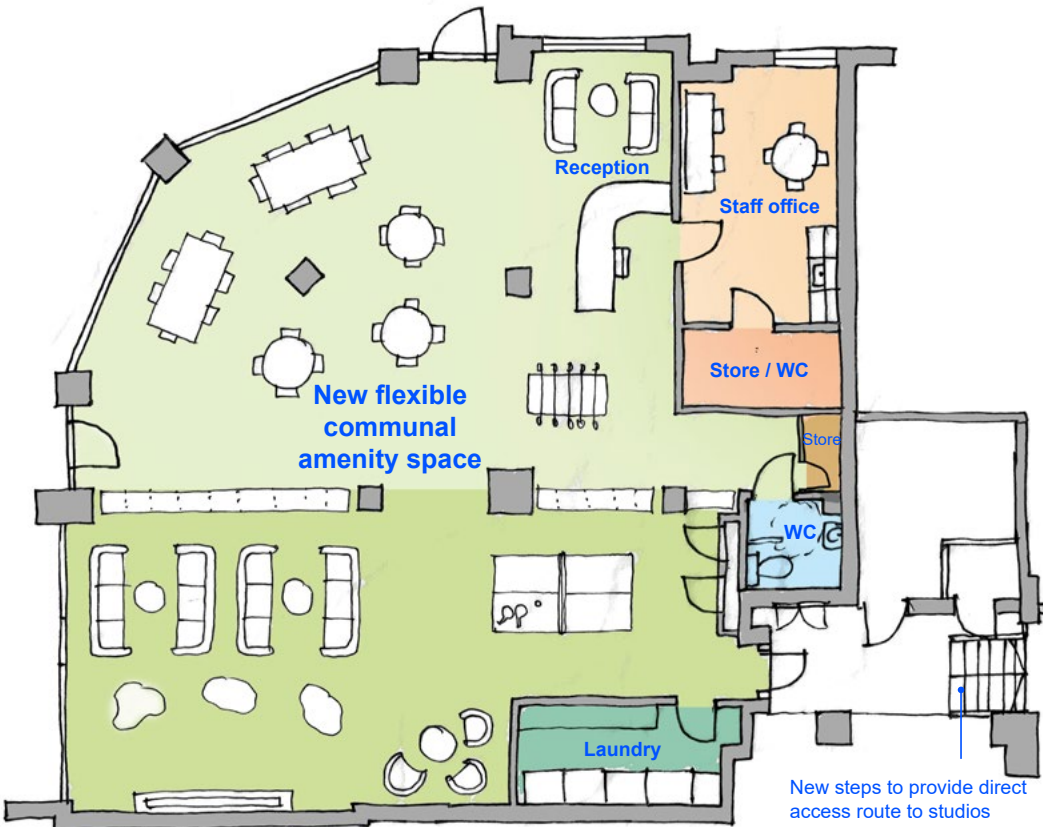
The steps are proposed to be finished in buff/grey coloured paving slabs with PPC paint finished square edge metal balustrading, to match the existing adjacent paving and railings on the site.



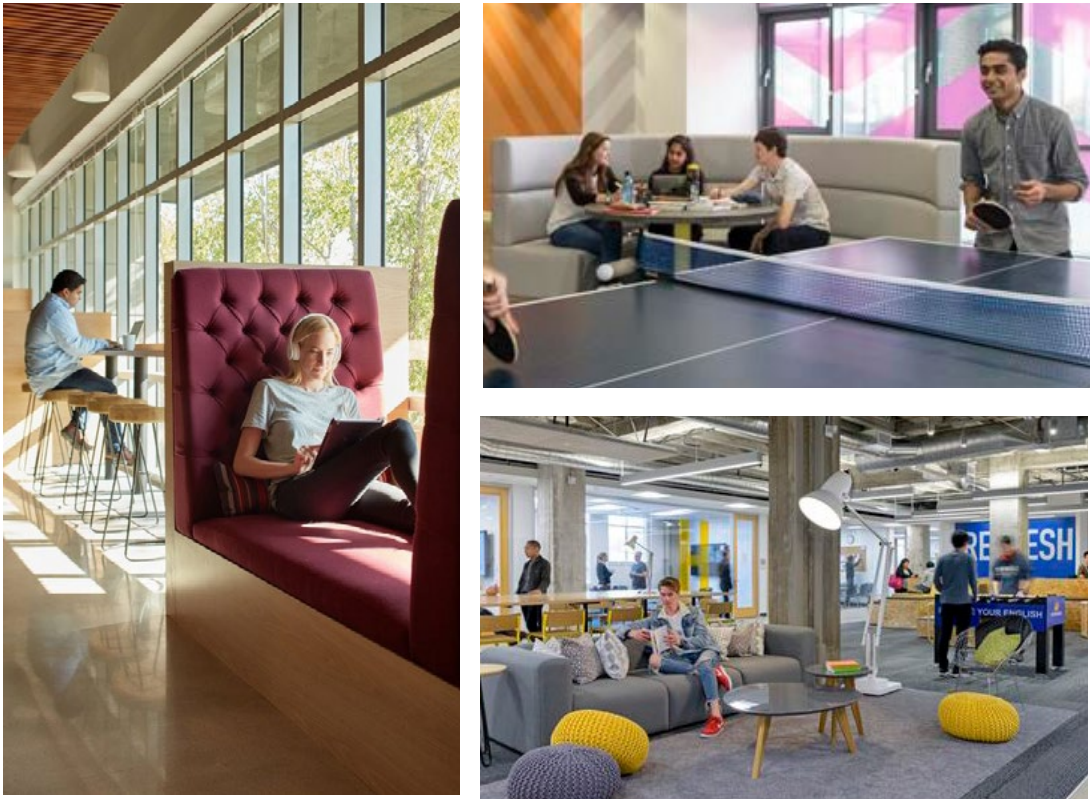
Existing plan of vacant ground floor corner commercial unit



Existing views of vacant ground floor corner commercial unit with shuttered street frontages



Proposed illustrative plan sketch of new student communal amenity space with an indicative furniture layout option



Example images of student study and games spaces, activating the street frontage

3.5. Operational management: A proven track record

Operational management strategy - example project

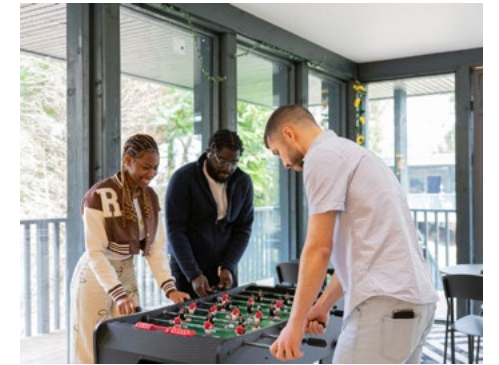
Almero Student have a proven track record of delivering and successfully managing standalone student communal amenity facilities across the country.

A recently completed example is at Beech Gardens, Birmingham, comprising two standalone new-build timber and glass pavilions for student communal amenity. Also designed by BAL Architecture the pavilions feature flexible space for quiet study, co-working, social games and outdoor garden space.

At Beech Gardens the following operational management strategy has been applied:

- Restricted opening hours of 7am to 11pm, with electronic key card access, enabling data-logs and tracking.
- On site management staff regularly inspecting and available 24/7.
- CCTV monitoring across the site to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of all residents.
- 'Traffic light' warning system and disciplinary procedures in place to manage the conduct of all residents in a fair and appropriate manner.
- Social programming in place to offer a schedule of organised communal events throughout the year.
- Dedicated accredited health and safety manager to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation.
- All residents given an orientation and induction into fire safety and evacuation procedures.
- Designated maintenance operative available to promptly record and address any maintenance issues reported by residents via the Almero app.

The proposed new communal amenity space at Ladybarn House would have a very similar operational management strategy.



Communal amenity pavilions recently completed and managed by Almero Student at Beech Gardens, Birmingham

4. Access Statement

4.1. Access strategy overview

The access to all proposed spaces are to remain as existing.

The 3 no. new studios proposed feature their own designated secure entrance doors accessed from existing corridors.

The proposed communal amenity space at ground floor level maintains all existing pedestrian access doors from the surrounding footpaths.

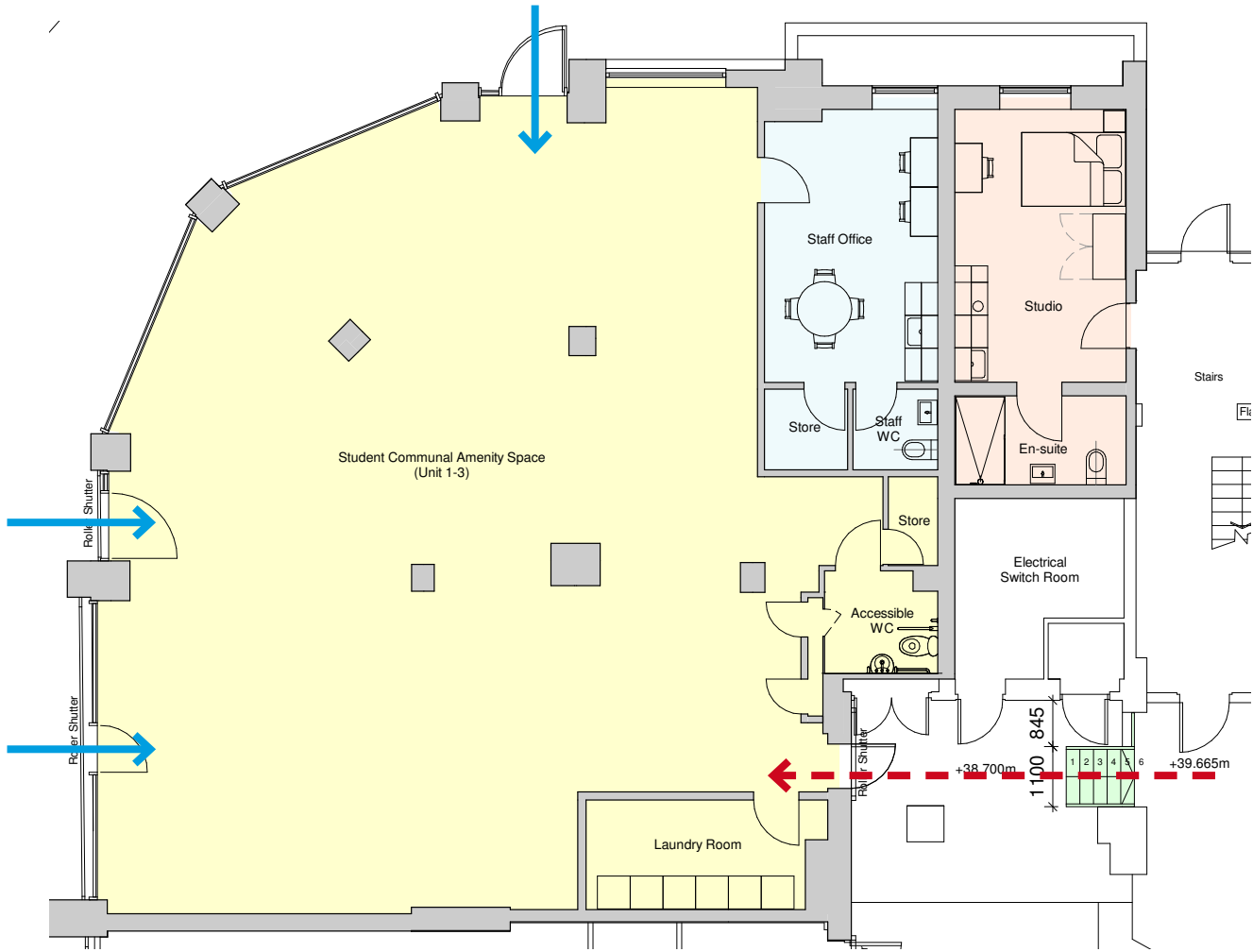
Some new external steps are proposed opposite the rear access door of the amenity space to enhance the pedestrian experience from the accommodation blocks to the east. The proposed steps would mediate an existing site level difference of around 1m and offer a more direct and safe access route to the new amenity space for the students. The accessibility strategy for wheelchair users would remain unaffected as existing.

The proposed communal amenity block is to be managed with secure access, restricted opening times and monitored by CCTV.

All entrances and access paths across the site are to be well illuminated at night for the safety and security of all students.



Photos showing the existing wall and railing which prevents direct pedestrian access to the ground floor commercial space from the eastern accommodation blocks. There is a finished floor level difference of approximately 1 metre.



Proposed ground floor plan with new external steps to provide a more direct pedestrian access route (Red arrow) to the communal amenity space and mediate the existing floor level difference.

Access Key

- Existing entrance access retained (step-free)
- Existing rear entrance with proposed new steps to provide a more direct pedestrian route

5. Planning Context

5.1. Planning benefit summary

The proposals are supported by adopted Local Plan and national planning policies and would deliver the following significant benefits:

1. The proposals will enable the refurbishment and modernisation of the existing student accommodation in Ladybarn House, to improve the enjoyment and living quality of all student residents.
2. Existing shared amenity spaces within Ladybarn House are significantly under used. Improved shared amenities will increase the living quality and enjoyment of student residents and encourage social interaction. In addition, the existing shared spaces will be re-purposed to provide an additional 3 no. high quality studio rooms.
3. The proposals will re-activate the ground floor, through the much needed use of the prominent corner unit (Unit 1-3) and restore active frontage to an important part of Fallowfield District Centre. Rejuvenation of existing retail frontage will maximise the appeal of neighbouring retail units to new retail occupiers and restore active frontage to Wilmslow Road, as well as employment opportunities for local residents.

